

Welcome – Fr. Michael Ryan
Interfaith Prayer and Lamentation
February 9, 2013

My friends, welcome to St. James Cathedral.

On the Catholic liturgical calendar we are still in what we call “Ordinary Time” but, as you well know, this is anything but ordinary time! The events in Newtown, Connecticut, on December 14, catapulted a whole nation from ordinary time into extraordinary time, from business-as-usual to building the truly unusual -- an ecumenical and interfaith coalition committed to change, to moving from passive acquiescence to active resistance when it comes to gun violence.

Tonight’s Candlelight Vigil and March is evidence of the growing public outrage at what happened that day in Newtown when 26 people, 20 of them defenseless and vulnerable little children, were not just killed but blown to bits by weapons that should never have been sold in our stores, allowed in our streets, or found in our homes.

We have marched tonight and we are praying tonight because we have had enough. No, we have had too much! Too much violence, too much bloodshed, too much political posturing, too much caving in to powerful lobbies that generate fear and place personal preference and privilege above public safety.

All of this must change and we must use our voices and our resolve to see that it does. President Obama has reminded us that keeping our children safe is our first task as a society and that that this is how we will be judged. And, of course, we know that the ultimate judgment will be made by the God who spoke long ago through the Prophet Isaiah about turning swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

My friends, we are climbing Isaiah’s steep mountain. Let us climb that mountain together as long as it takes to change hearts and minds and consciences. And let us commit ourselves to do all we can to bring about the changes in our laws that will guarantee peace and public safety in ways that weapons never will!